

# CANCER NEWSLETTER

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Vol. 1 No. 38

Oct. 4, 1974

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The Cancer Newsletter  
Subscription \$100 per year

## BREAST CANCER REPORT TO THE PROFESSION SUDDENLY IS A REPORT TO THE NATION; TREATMENT PROGRESS NOTED

The timing was ironic, with overtones of tragedy for yet another of the Nation's first families. Nathaniel Berlin, director of NCI's Div. of Biology & Diagnosis and chairman of the Breast Cancer Task Force, had for months planned a "state of the art" report to the scientific community on detection and treatment of breast cancer. Date for the report—Monday, Sept. 30—was scheduled weeks ago.

Then Betty Ford, the wife of President Gerald Ford, underwent a radical mastectomy two days before the meeting, after a lump in her right breast was found to be malignant. Suddenly Berlin's report took on an aura of major national significance. Reporters and other non-scientists jostled for seats with the professional observers in the NIH.

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### In Brief

## DEVITA CHANGES HIS MIND, AGREES TO HEAD TREATMENT DIV.; CONTRACTS CHIEF CARL FRETTS MOVES UP TO NIH

NCI STAFF turnover continues with these key developments: Vincent T. DeVita Jr., who first refused an offer to head the Div. of Cancer Treatment (The Cancer Newsletter, Sept. 27), changed his mind and accepted; Carl Fretts, chief of the Research Contracts Branch, moved up to become chief of the Div. of Contracts & Grants at NIH, replacing Alex Smalberg who retired. DeVita, who was head of the Medicine Branch, was reluctant to leave clinical work, gave in when NCI Director Rauscher agreed he could continue some of his clinical activities. Rauscher, who feels he has been reasonably successful in building a young, top-flight staff, especially hated to lose Fretts. Richard J. Colton is acting contracts chief while Rauscher looks for a permanent replacement. Another possible departure in the near future: Nathaniel Berlin, director of the Div. of Biology & Diagnosis, who may take his retirement and accept an offer outside government. Berlin is the last of the pre-Rauscher era division directors. ... **WATCH FOR RFPs** coming out soon from the Cancer Control Program for training of mammography technicians. ... **GRANT APPLICATION** deadlines will be strictly enforced, the NIH Div. of Research Grants has warned. DRG study sections have been notorious for ignoring established deadlines, opening the door to favoritism charges. No more: from now on, those that miss the deadline for one reviewing period will be held over to the next. Submitting sketchy outlines by deadline time, then following with major additions and revisions, won't work, either. ... **JUNKETS**, or even the appearance of a junket, must be avoided by NCI advisory groups with their meetings, symposia, etc. One group had scheduled a meeting for Bermuda but had to change it to San Juan, Puerto Rico, at NCI's insistence. Evidently Puerto Rico is not considered junket territory.

NCI Reportedly  
Gets \$691 Million  
From House,  
Senate Conferees

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Shubik Blasts  
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# INDUSTRY SCIENTISTS ARE PROSTITUTES, SHUBIK CHARGES

Philippe Shubik, a member of the National Cancer Advisory Board from Emory Institute who is NCAB's most outspoken critic of smoking and the tobacco industry, started a meeting of NCI's Tobacco Working Group with a blast against the group's industry-employed scientists.

TWG is made up of NCI staff members, representatives of other government agencies and non-government scientists including some who work for cigarette manufacturers.

Addressing his remarks to the industry representatives, Shubik said, "It shocks me that 20 years later (after the health hazards of cigarettes had become evident) you have not joined the community of men. You will go down in history delaying facts well-known to the scientific community."

"When I see people die of a preventable disease," Shubik continued, "and I know what caused it, I get very angry. It offends me when people who are scientists and who know better, offer the errant nonsense that cigarettes are not a health threat."

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tobacco smoking is a primary cause of lung cancer and contributes significantly to cardiovascular and pulmonary disease. "I doubt that anyone in this room really feels that is not the case," he said.

William W. Bates, director of the Liggett & Myers research department, replied, "That premise may be true for NCI and Tobacco Working Group staff, but it is not true for this member."

Shubik continued the debate with another industry scientist in the hall after the meeting. "Won't you admit that scientists who disagree with you have a right to their opinions. Phil?" the industry representative asked.

"Not when you are paid to reach that conclusion," Shubik replied angrily. "That makes you a prostitute. It is unconscionable that 70,000 people a year will die—at least that many—as a result of using the products your companies make, and you, as a scientist who knows better, won't speak out."

The group listened to presentations from representatives of other U.S. organizations and foreign governments engaged in tobacco research, including:

—Edward Martel, of the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colo., and Edward Radford, professor of environmental medicine at Hopkins. They contend that studies have shown the radioactive polonium 210 is absorbed by tobacco leaves either from fertilizers applied to the soil or through the atmosphere. It is ingested by smokers and builds up in the lungs and could be the carcinogenic factor in lung cancer. They did not receive much encouragement because their findings have not been duplicated in other studies.

—John Wyatt, of the Univ. of Kentucky, where a program financed primarily by a statewide cigarette tax is attempting to develop tobacco varieties containing less tar and nicotine. Wyatt said progress is being made but that commercial use of new varieties is still several years away.

—Frank Fairweather, of the United Kingdom Dept. of Health. England is trying to develop a tobacco substitute, with cellulose and other material, without much success. The prospect exists that a mixture of 30% artificial material with tobacco in cigarettes might be acceptable to smokers.

## RFPs AVAILABLE

Requests for proposals described here pertain to contracts planned for award by the National Cancer Inst. Inc. unless otherwise noted. Write to the Contracting Officer or Contract Specialist for copies of the RFP. Some listings will show the phone number of the Contract Specialist, who will respond to questions about the RFP. Contract Sections for the Cause & Prevention and Biology and Diagnostic Divisions are located at: NCI, Executive Bldg., NIH, Bethesda, Md. 20814; for the Treatment and Control Divisions at NCI, Bldg. 36B, Rm. 2000, Silver Spring.

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